

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A method for providing a search output responsive to a query, comprising:

maintaining a search-routing database;

receiving a query from a user, said query comprising search request data in a plurality of search request fields of predetermined types;

selecting the search request data in at least one of the search request fields;

searching said search-routing database for ~~at least one~~ one or more database identifiers, based on the selected search request data, each of said one or more database identifiers identifying one or more first databases;

routing the query to a selected one of the one or more first databases identified by said ~~at least one~~ one or more database identifiers and a to one or more second databases associated with the one or more first databases;

searching a selected one of the one or more second databases for database records responsive to the query;

searching a selected one of the one or more second databases for an update record responsive to the query;

determining whether a delete indicator is made in the update record; and

including in a search output the records responsive to the query except at least one or more of the database records which correspond to the update record when the delete indicator is made in the update record.

2. (cancelled).

3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the delete indicator comprises at least one field of the update record.

4. (cancelled)

5. (cancelled)

6. (cancelled)

7. (previously presented) A system for providing a search output responsive to a query, comprising:

a search-routing database;

one or more first databases, said first databases including database records having database fields;

one or more second databases associated with the first databases, said second databases including update records having update database fields;

an input device for receiving the query from a user, the query comprised of search request data in search request fields of predetermined types;

a search router for receiving the query and selecting search request data in at least one of the search request fields, the search router comprising a first search engine configured for searching said search-routing database for one or more database identifiers, each of said one or more database identifiers identifying one or more of the first databases;

a second search engine for searching a selected one of the first databases for database records responsive to the query, returning the database records responsive to the query, searching a selected one of the second databases for an update record responsive to the query, returning the update record responsive to the query, and determining whether a delete indicator is made in an update database field of the update record; and

a sorter for generating the responsive records resulting from the search of the selected first and second databases, and including in the search output the records responsive to the query except at least one or more of the database records which correspond to the update record when the delete indicator is made in the update database field of the update record.

8. (cancelled)

9. (cancelled)

10. (cancelled)

11. (previously presented) The system of claim 7, further comprising a table for identifying the one or more second databases associated with the one or more first databases.

12. (currently amended) A method of routing search requests, comprising:  
receiving a search request at a receiving server, the receiving server having one or more first databases accessible for searching, the search request comprising search request data in a plurality of search request fields of predetermined types;

selecting search request data in at least one of the search request fields;

searching a routing database for at least one one or more database identifiers identifying one or more of the first databases, based on the selected search request data, to determine whether the search request should be routed to the one or more search first databases accessible by the receiving server; and

if it is determined that the search request should be routed to a selected one of the one or more first databases accessible to the receiving server:

routing the search request to a selected one of the one or more first databases accessible by the receiving server and a selected one of one or more second databases associated with the one or more first databases;

searching the selected one of one or more first databases accessible to the receiving server ~~and the one or more second databases~~; and

searching the selected one of the one or more second databases for an update record responsive to the query;

determining whether a delete indicator is made in the update record; and

including in a search output the records responsive to the query except at least one or more of the database records which correspond to the update record when the delete indicator is made in the update record

~~returning the results of the search.~~

13. (previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the determining includes analyzing the search request to identify one or more items of routing data.

14. (currently amended) The method of claim 12 further comprising routing the search request to a second server if it is determined that the search request should not be routed to the one or more first databases accessible by the receiving server.

15. (previously presented) The method of claim 14, wherein said second server is remotely located from the receiving server.

16. (previously presented) The method of claim 12, wherein the one or more second databases comprise a plurality of records for updating the one or more first databases.

17. (previously presented) The method of claim 16, further comprising merging the search results returned from the first databases with the search results returned from the one or more second databases.

18. (previously presented) The method of claim 14, further comprising routing the search request to the one or more databases accessible by said second server.

19. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, further comprising returning to the receiving server the results of the search obtained in response to the routing of the search request to the one or more databases accessible by said second server.

20. (currently amended) A system for routing search requests comprising:  
an input device ~~for receiving~~ configured to receive a search request, the search request comprising search request data in a plurality of search request fields of predetermined types; and  
a receiving server having one or more first databases accessible for searching, configured to search

~~wherein the receiving server is capable of searching a routing database for at least one one or more database identifiers identifying one or more of the first databases based on search request data selected from at least one of the search request fields to determine whether the search request should be routed to the one or more first databases accessible by the receiving server, and to route~~ routing the search request to the one or more first databases accessible by the receiving server and to one or more second databases associated with the one or more first

databases, if it is determined that the search request should be routed to the one or more first databases accessible by the receiving server;

a processor configured to search a selected one of the first databases for database records responsive to the query, returning the database records responsive to the query, search a selected one of the second databases for an update record responsive to the query, return the update record responsive to the query, and determine whether a delete indicator is made in an update database field of the update record; and

a sorter configured to generate the responsive records resulting from the search of the selected first and second databases, and include in the search output the records responsive to the query except at least one or more of the database records which correspond to the update record when the delete indicator is made in the update database field of the update record.

21. (previously presented) The system of claim 20, wherein the receiving server determines said search request routing by analyzing the search request to identify one or more items of routing data.

22. (previously presented) The system of claim 21, wherein the receiving server routes the search request to a second server if it is determined that the search request should not be routed to the first databases accessible by the receiving server.

23. (previously presented) The system of claim 22, wherein the second server is remotely located from the receiving server.

24. (previously presented) The system of claim 22, wherein the second server routes the search request to the one or more databases accessible by the second server.

25. (previously presented) The system of claim 24, wherein the second server returns the results of the search obtained in response to the routing of the search request to the one or more databases accessible by the second server.

26. (previously presented) The system of claim 20, the one or more second databases comprise a plurality of records for updating the one or more first databases.

27. (cancelled).

28. (currently amended) The system of claim 26 27, wherein the receiving server merges the search results returned from the one or more first databases with the search results returned from the second databases.

29. (currently amended) A method of routing search requests comprising: maintaining a routing database for identifying one or more first databases to search in response to a search request;

receiving the search request, the search request comprising search request data in a plurality of search request fields of predetermined types;

selecting search request data in at least one of the search request fields;

searching the routing database for one or more at least one database identifiers identifying one or more of the first databases, based on the selected search request data, and to determine at least one route to one or more first databases to search in response to the search request;

if the search of the routing database is successful:[]

routing the search request to a selected one of the one or more first databases associated with the at least one one or more database identifiers and to a one or more secondary databases associated with the one or more first databases; and

searching a selected one of the one or more first databases for database records responsive to the query,

returning the database records responsive to the query;

searching a selected one of the one or more second databases for an update record responsive to the query;

returning the update record responsive to the query;

determining whether a delete indicator is made in an update database field of the update record;

generating the responsive records resulting from the search of the selected first and second databases; and

including in the search output the records responsive to the query except at least one or more of the database records which correspond to the update record when the delete indicator is made in the update database field of the update record; and

in other instances, routing the search request to a second database identified by one or more default routes.

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 29, further comprising analyzing the search request to identify one or more items of routing data.

31. (previously presented) The method of claim 30, further comprising searching a routing database with the identified one or more items of routing data to identify at least one of the first databases to which the search request should be routed.

32. (previously presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the routing databases identifies at least one route to at least one of the first databases that are appropriate to search in response to the search request.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the search request is routed to at least one of the first databases identified by the one or more default routes if the search request does not include a field that is used for routing.

34. (previously presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the search request is routed to at least one of the first databases identified by the one or more default routes if the search request includes a field that is used for routing but the field has an unspecified value.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the search request is routed to at least one of the first databases identified by the one or more default routes if the search request includes a field that is used for routing but the data populating the field does not correspond to any entries in the routing databases.